

UNCLAS KINGSTON 001255

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CAR (WBENT), PM/DTCC BLUE LANTERN COORDINATOR

E.O. 12958: NA

TAGS: ETTC KOMC JM

SUBJECT: BLUE LANTERN APPLICATION 05-946041

REF: STATE 062395

¶1. (U) Econoff spoke with Michael Crichton, president of Crichton Brothers, Inc. on May 9. Paragraphs 2-8 (below) respond to questions asked in Reftel, Paragraph 3.

¶2. (U) The company's typical customers for these weapons are businessmen, farmers, and quite a few policemen who are purchasing their own off-duty firearms. The weapons are used for personal protection. By law, there is no pistol sport-shooting allowed in Jamaica.

¶3. (U) Their customers are located throughout the island. They are the only licensed dealers in Montego Bay, and their core business model focuses on servicing the markets in the cities of Mandeville, Negril, Brown's Town and Falmouth, as well as the parishes of Trelawny, Hanover, Manchester and Saint Ann.

¶4. (U) The company does have an established, legitimate customer base for its pistols and ammunition. They sell to anyone who comes in with a permit to purchase issued by the police. They have been in business since 1935, and are the oldest arms dealer on the island. Until recently, they have been piggybacking on Ernest Hoo's (Arms & Ammo) import license, placing orders through him and reselling the weapons. Due to this arrangement, Crichton Brothers let their import license lapse in the 1980s.

¶5. (U) According to Michael Crichton, sales records are retained forever. The company records the date, name of the customer, address on the license, the make of the gun, the rounds of ammunition purchased - the type of which has to match the approved gun on the police-issued license, gun license number, and customer's signature. They currently have records going back to 1985. Earlier records were destroyed in a fire.

¶6. (U) The company understands the prohibitions on re-export and re-transfer outside of Jamaica, and have no plans to do so. Crichton said he only ever exported weapons once, in 1977, to an owner who had emigrated to Canada and wanted them to ship his gun collection.

¶7. (U) Post feels that the company is likely to abide by these provisions. Crichton Brothers is an old, well-established company with a long track record of legitimate gun sales. In recent years, they've purchased weapons from Arms & Ammo (Ernest Hoo, proprietor), but with his recent difficulties in meeting demand from his customers, Crichton Brothers, Inc. has decided to resume importing the weapons directly.

¶8. (U) If the Department wants Post to do a site visit, Mr. Crichton says he's more than happy to receive an officer from the Embassy. Montego Bay is located approximately 100 miles from Kingston, and traveling there takes roughly four hours by car.

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